567 /14/ The Mossi obtained slaves by purchase, warfare, or birth. No distinction was made among these various kinds of slaves; they were all treated in the same manner. The Bousansé and Gourounsi furnished the greatest number of slaves, and, as elsewhere, the Moslem Yarsé and Haoussa were the main traffickers. The Mossi sold each other into slavery too, as when a powerful man seized and sold a child or even an adult whom he had found defenseless in the bush. Sometimes a child was separated from its slave mother, but this was unusual. Slaves were part of the family property and devolved to the heir when their master died. When given in marriage by their own master, they acquired a certain freedom: they had their own house and their fields which they cultivated for their own use; they could acquire property and buy beasts of burden, goats, sheep, and cattle. The only vestige of slavery was the obligation to give all their daughters in marriage to their master. This is why whole villages of slaves are to be found, in no way distinguished from other villages. The village of Koupéla, estimated at 2, 500 inhabitants, is entirely composed of the naba's slaves with the exception of three families. The prime minister himself, the Saman'Naba, and all the ministers are slaves of the naba. It is true that this designation "slave" includes slaves through indebtedness. Whenever a native had borrowed from the naba an amount of some importance, such as the price of a cow, and was unable to pay it back, an arrangement was made between the debtor and the naba. The former promised all his daughters to the latter and thus pledged all his descendants. It was then said that he had become a slave to the naba.

566 Serfs were another source of hands to work the land. There were two kinds of serfs, or man-servants if one prefers: the dakwaba and the noakansé. A dakonré (singular of dakwaba; etymologically, "one who is not married") has a family who places him in the service of a rich man with the sole purpose of getting him married, of getting him a wife when he comes of age. He labors for his master, works his fields, runs errands for him; he may, with his master's permission, have a field of his own and a few small possessions; yet, though he is free, he may not leave his master to enter someone else's service. A noakanga (singular of noakansé) has no family. He places himself into someone's service of his own free will in order to be fed, housed, sometimes clothed; his master gives him a wife more or less promptly according to region. A noakanga is freer than a dakonré, for he

Fulani MSIL

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566 may leave his master whenever he pleases, either to devote himself to trade or to enter the service of another man; but often he gets all
M F his work from his master.

563 The Peul shepherds never were slaves of the Mossi, because they
M only knew how to watch the herds and were incapable of working the
F land. They were, nevertheless, held in severe vassalage by the Mossi,
[789] especially by the nabas, and served as victims in certain sacrifices. Some Mossi sold by the Yarsé or by other Mossi have occasionally been their slaves, especially in the Dori region called Gyémaré by the natives.

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157 The power of the chiefs and the submission of their subjects are characteristic traits of Mossi country. The spirit of submission permeates the whole Mossi mentality. The Mossi are not particularly secretive or incommunicative, as the Bambara are said to be. On the contrary, they talk quite freely to their friends, even of their personal affairs; this does not mean that they are unable to keep a secret, especially if it is the king's secret. Two individuals have to be equals if there is to be some freedom between them; this freedom may develop into a certain closeness, but never into friendship in the highest sense of the term. If the Mossi appears secretive, it is because he is afraid to offend someone more powerful than himself. He always yields before a chief, before someone who "has the strength," as he puts it, while inwardly he may retain his own opinion and act as he pleases. When a chief talks, he hears nothing but these words
M in reply: bé néré, naba — "That's it, that's right. I agree with you."
576 The Mossi salute, formerly used in all the Black empires of the Sudan, especially in the courts of Ghana, Mali, and Gao, provides good evidence of this mentality. When we first enter the country as foreigners, we are shocked to see a man thus lower himself before another man. In order to salute, the Mossi puts down his load, hat, and sword, removes his shoes, sits on the ground, folds his legs slightly, and leans the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest against the ground, as far apart as possible; the forearms, folded in front of

567 this reason. They did not work for the Moro Naba except seven or
611 eight days a year when they were called along with all the other inhabitants of Ouahigouya, without exception, to the Moro Naba's fields. Actually, they were thus free men as far as work was concerned. Half their daughters, however, reverted to the Moro Naba, who took them for himself or for his close relatives. On the other hand, they supported themselves completely (food, clothing, etc.). The Moro Naba gave them no assistance whatever in this respect.

Let us add that the ordinary captives, the bingo of the common Mossi, found a safe retreat at the court of the Moro Naba. If a slave was dissatisfied with his master, he would run away and take asylum with the chief of Yatenga. The latter handed him to the Rassam Naba, who saw to it that a hut and a field were given to him (if he was married) and a wife as well (if he did not have any). As long as he was not married, he would cultivate the fields of the Moro Naba's wives, who provided him with food in return. Once married, he would work the soil, labor for himself and his wife, and have no obligations other than the general duties of the bingo who belonged to the Moro Naba, as we have seen above. In short, he would acquire the general status of a Crown slave.

Let us add, however, that if the master came and claimed his slave from the Moro Naba, the captive was sometimes returned. This depended on the fairness of the master's case (he had never mistreated his slave, had always been good to him, etc.) and also on the more or less sizable gift which he presented to the Moro Naba in order to gain his good graces.

The bingo of the Riziam Naba, an independent king as we have already noted /not translated/, were in the same position as the bingo of the Moro Naba and not in the position of ordinary bingo. The same applied to the bingo of the three great chiefs /267/ of the canton, the Zitenga Naba, Ratenga Naba, and Roussoum Naba.

• 56b 6. Serfs. In Yatenga, there were serfs of a sort, the bagaré, to use the Mossi term. The only ones who had them, however, were the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Moro Naba of Riziam, and a few great canton chiefs, such as the Zitenga Naba and the Ratenga Naba. Not even the Moro Naba's ministers were entitled to own them, much less the common Mossi. The bagaré was a Peul slave, a dimadio (rimaïbé in the plural) who had been captured from the Peul or who had fled from them to the Mossi, in short, a former rimaïbé who had

566 gone into Mossi hands. The bagaré did not till the soil. They simply minded their master's herds. As for other work, they also built the straw huts where the Moro Naba of Yatenga, the Riziam Naba, and other chiefs slept at the New Year (we shall see under "Religion" /not translated/ to what purpose).

The bagaré saw to their own support (food and clothing). The multiplying herd belonged to the naba, but its yield (milk and butter) went to the bagaré. Out of this yield, however, they gave the naba whatever he needed of milk and butter.

567 In short, we can see that among the Mossi and Foulsé there exist, or rather existed, the two kinds of slaves known throughout the /French/ Sudan, the trade slaves and the house slaves, the former being salable and the latter a part of the family. Nowadays, as a result of the prohibition against their purchase and sale, there remains but a dwindling number of house slaves.

421 Now we come to family property and its transmission.

596 Family property, properly so-called. —There is no family property among our Mossi, since no work is done in common by the whole family. The family property is limited to family charms owned by the boudoukasaman.

423 Property of the compound, or subfamily property. —This does not
592 exist either, for the same reason, except for the compound itself which is the communal property of the zaka group. While each household has huts of its own, these huts are a usufructuary possession which is in accordance with the full ownership of the zaka group. Now, if some household chief wishes to build a new hut, he notifies the zakasoba, who, incidentally, always grants permission. Once the hut is built, the builder may destroy it if he wishes, which goes to prove that he has full ownership over it, having made it. He cannot, however, destroy the hut where he lives which he did not build as it actually belongs to the zaka. In short, there may be in the compound a mixture of communal property (belonging to the zaka) and individual property (hut built by a household or by an individual, millet granary erected in the same circumstances, etc.), but the communal property prevails by far.

423 Property of the work group. —Here, communal property is impor-
571 tant. /268/ It is from the group fields that the group derives most of its sustenance (seven months out of twelve). The work implements

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797 167 sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military service ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

571 797 554 566 [567] Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; besides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intangible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

797 291 515 Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

794 577 The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

794 Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

the original segment of the ruling Biligo lineage had lived in Barkago for some time, it divided into two minor lineages and settled in two saghse, Natenga and Godin. A noble from Godin possessed the nam, but it eventually passed to a noble from Natenga. The new chief then founded a new saka called Kedpalago because he wanted more living space for his own children. As a result, the minor lineage of Natenga now had two babissi living in two saghse. The minor lineage of Godin subsequently declined in size and prestige. The only evidence of its former importance was that its eldest male continued to make separate sacrifices to his own chiefly ancestors, even though the more recent holders of the nam made sacrifices to all former chiefs. These independent sacrifices were made in spite of the fact that this minor lineage kept growing smaller because its male members left to live elsewhere or to join maternal patrilineages with higher status. The sacrifices were expected to cease only if and when the minor lineage were to disappear with the incorporation of the widows and orphans of its last surviving males into the other Biligo groups of the village and district. Of course, if the Godin minor lineage had regained the nam, it undoubtedly would have experienced a rebirth and renewal of strength. It might have attracted its daughter's sons, and even aliens who would have lived in its saghse as they did in those of the ruling lineage segments.

A fourth saka, Nakomgo ("we hunger after the nam"), was inhabited by the noble descendants of Naba Ngado, the district chief who had replaced the descendant of Naba Biligo of Nobere. Since these nobles traced their descent from two full brothers, Kouliga and Kongo, they formed two related minor lineages with five component minimal lineages. The compounds of the two babissi of the Kouliga minor lineage were separate but contiguous. Near them were the compounds of the three babissi of the Kongo minor lineage. Scattered about in the Nakomgo saka were compounds of sisters' sons, strangers, and nobles' slaves.

The people of Narila, the fifth saka of Barkago, were members of the aboriginal Ninisi population, and thus furnished the village's earth-priest. He made sacrifices to the earth shrines in the village, gave ritual permission for building compounds and digging graves, and took control of the village during the period between the death of a chief and the accession of another. Scattered throughout the various saghse were compounds inhabited by people of serf, slave, or refugee origin.

Of all the groups within the village, the Ngado people kept the most exact genealogies. They did so because one of the segments of their maximal lineage held the district nam, and as nobles they had theoretical access to it. Once they had lost the nam of the district, the descendants of Biligo

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Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsaogho Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

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worked for the Mogho Naba in and around the palace courtyard, and in the fields. They also kept his herds and provided him with animals from their own herds. Like the Dapore, they were seldom sold, but they often had to give their sons and daughters to the Mogho Naba.

The last group of persons who contributed their services to the Mogho Naba were the Kamboinse. Their origin is also unclear. Most of my respondents claimed that the Kamboinse and their chief first came to Ouagadougou from the direction of the Gold Coast, that they bore guns, and that they offered their services as guards to the Mogho Naba.[21] Later on, the sovereign allegedly assigned slaves to the Kamboinse unit, with the result that the entire group eventually took on a serf-like character. The Kamboinse guarded the Mogho Naba's palace and seized for him the goods of persons whom he condemned to death.

The services performed for the Mogho Naba by his pages and other youthful retainers also contributed significantly to the support of his administration. We have already seen how these young men and boys took care of his every need and functioned as important messengers within the royal household. The Mogho Naba also had control over the daughters of his serfs, whom he used to obtain revenue from aliens and subjects alike. Periodically, the Mogho Naba gave one of these girls as pughsiudga to a man, thus obligating him to render goods and services to the court. Moreover, the man had to return the eldest daughter he had by this wife to the Mogho Naba as a future pughsiudga. In this way, the sovereign had a revolving store of women through whom he could bind men to himself in a nexus of obligations, and from whom he eventually received additional women.[22]

The provincial ministers of the Ouagadougou kingdom occupied such a strategic position within the central administration that anyone rendering gifts or tribute to the Mogho Naba always gave presents to them as well. Their main source of revenue, however, came from the villages under their direct control, and from the retainers who lived in their compounds and in their wards in the capital. The economic relations between the ministers and their villages were similar to those between the district chiefs and their villages, and will be discussed below. The retainers, serfs, and slaves who served these ministers provided them with many of the services their counterparts rendered to the Mogho Naba. They kept their houses in repair and provided them with firewood and with fodder for their horses. Many of them also cultivated fields for their masters. Whenever the ministers needed extra goods or services, they called on those persons who lived in their compounds or in their wards. For example, hun-

dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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For example, the villagers of Barkago traditionally cultivated and harvested a field of millet behind his compound for the chief. The people of Pinse, Donse, Passingtenga, and Tewarka cultivated millet for him in their own villages, and those of Togose and Basbedo cultivated rice for him in their excellent lowlands.

The district chief had fields both behind his compound and in the bush, which were cultivated for him by his retainers, serfs, and slaves. More than the Mogho Naba and the provincial ministers, the district chief believed that a Moaga must perform agricultural work during the planting season; to show his interest in farming, he often personally supervised the work on his plantations. When the task of weeding or harvesting proved too much for his own people, he asked his villages for a *sosogha*. On that day, each village chief, accompanied by his men, went to the district chief's fields, where, to the accompaniment of drums and chants and with the verbal encouragement of district administrators, the villages vied with each other in their task. The district chief usually sat under a tree and watched the proceedings and occasionally visited the various contingents to observe the progress made. Toward evening, the chief's wives gave the workers large quantities of food and drink in compensation for their services.

Like the Mogho Naba, the district chief had officials who collected taxes on commodities sold in local markets. These district market officials were usually serfs, Gurunsi captives, or bondsmen from other populations. Mossi rarely served in such capacities because many of the local market places were considered ritually dangerous, and their titular deities, the Tengkouga, were believed to wreak vengeance on market officials who were tardy with sacrifices. The local Kos Naba supervised the slaughtering of every animal killed in the market, kept its skin so that its ownership could be verified if necessary, and collected taxes from the butchers in the form of meat or cowries. The Raga Naba of the district was not as strict as his counterpart in Ouagadougou, and seldom imposed formal taxes on the traders. He usually walked around the market, trailed by the chief's servants, and seized calabashes of grain and other commodities, which he placed in the servants' baskets. The Raga Naba did not tax those itinerant traders or caravaneers who visited the markets in the district, nor did he interfere with them in any other way. These merchants usually had business and personal relations with the chief, and he himself handled revenue from this source. The merchants gave him goods from the forest and Sahara regions, and he in turn often gave them wives, who were thus taken out of the district.

The Mossi district chief was always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, and thus welcomed strangers into his district because they "in-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters.

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands.

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well.

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head